

Part II: What Promotes Healthy Development and Protects Youth From Harm?	<i>Page</i>
Supporting Youth	18
Developmental Assets	26
Risk and Protective Factors	32
Examples of Positive Action	37

Supporting Youth: King County Teens Talk About Supports in Their Lives

Public Health - Seattle & King County organized twenty-four focus group discussions in 1995 in order to hear from youth and answer three research questions.

- What do young people perceive as strengths in their families, schools, neighborhoods, and communities?
- What kinds of support do youth perceive they are receiving?
- To whom do youth go when they need help and how do they learn about services if they need them?

This focus group study focused on the positive, nurturing and supportive aspects of the social environments in which young people are living in King County, including the major institutions which adolescents depend on for their development and well-being: families, friends, neighborhoods, schools, health systems, and communities. The study started at the beginning -- by talking to teens themselves asking what works for them and what does not, what is important to them, and who supports them and how.

Four groups (high school females, high school males, middle school females and middle school males) were held in each of five geographical areas. Eighteen of the county's 19 school districts were represented. Four additional groups were organized with out-of-school youth. In general, attempts were made to obtain a sample that would include the different age groups, geographical areas and ethnic communities in the county.

Participant Profile, 1995 Youth Focus Groups

Total	192	Race/Ethnicity	
		American Indian	5
Gender		European American	82
Female	99	Hispanic American	13
Male	93	African American	35
		Asian American	33
School		Mixed Ethnicity	22
Middle School	86	Unknown	2
High School	81	Age	
Out-of-School	25	Eleven	3
		Twelve	17
Region		Thirteen	35
Seattle	34	Fourteen	40
North/Northeast	34	Fifteen	24
Rural East	33	Sixteen	32
Southeast	39	Seventeen	27
Southwest	27	Eighteen	2
Out-of-School	25	Nineteen	4
		Unknown	8

Findings

The 192 teens participating in the 24 focus group discussions identified a great number of ways that they feel supported and ways they wish they were supported by their families, neighbors, schools and communities. They spoke about “things of the heart”—parents who take time and show empathy, friends and siblings who listen and keep secrets, teachers who take time and tell stories about themselves, school administrators who insist on climates of respect, counselors who take time to hear problems and keep confidences, youth group leaders and coaches who help build skills and a sense of belonging and contributing, and other adults in the community who, instead of judgments, offer encouragement and advice.

Major Themes and Youth Quotes Emerging from Discussions

Caring relationships:

- *Family that will always keep you on your feet; when you fall down they'll pick you right back up, and they'll take care of you for a while and put you back on your feet.*
- *I feel good because my dad is right here every day, giving me pointers and showing me where to go. Being that light in the tunnel.*
- *You definitely need figures like that [an adult other than a parent] in your life, because you can't always depend on your family, you can't*

always depend on your friends. If you've got this one person that's like doesn't really fit in either category, that's just kind of like central everything. He could say something bad about me and I'd still love him for the things he said good about me.

- *There was one kid who was gonna commit suicide...but it was because of those teachers that he's still alive today. They got the right words at the right time!*
- *We had a good teacher because he focused on keeping the room as one whole team, rather than just the teacher, and all the students below him. He talked about himself so we could relate to him and be friends with the teacher. That worked well.*

Time to talk:

- *It's nice to know that your parents are willing to take the time to set aside what is important to them, or what they need to get done and just say, "I'll help you if you need help". It's nice to know that they care.*
- *You know teachers care when they put in the extra time and they say, if you have problems, come to me before or after school.*
- *She not only does two recovery classes at school she spends all of her day listening to students, non-stop. She gives her home phone number out.*

Confidential communications and services:

- *If you need somebody to talk to, the counselor's there, and whatever goes on in her room stays in her room...but in her work I've never ever known her to tell anybody something that wasn't true.*
- *When you really need somebody, she's [school counselor] there for you. Then if she thinks it's really really serious, that's when she will ask your permission, if it's OK to talk to somebody else about it. But if you say that you want it to be between you and her, she keeps it that way.*
- *I think that there's like teen clinics, where they were talking about counseling. I think that you can't really go to counselors at your school, cause they tell your parents. And that's a big thing...There's got to be like maybe more community counselors that are open for kids to come in and talk.*

Climates of respect:

- *I think that if parents are showing their kids respect, the kids will show them respect back. If you are being good to your kid, the kid's going to be good back to you.*
- *Read the papers. The only time teenagers get mentioned is when they do good in sports, or they do bad stuff...*
- *Let them grow, like a flower; let them grow; don't chop them and cut them off to wherever you want them to go. Let them flourish into what they are, because everyone's different...*

Opportunities to participate:

- *I have a neighbor who is retired. Since I like gardening, he gardens a lot, and so he lets me come over sometimes during the summer. I weed out gardens with him, and then he'll let me and my brother come over and pick raspberries and stuff...so then we get all that...So I'm learning a lot and also, we get raspberry jam.*
- *Instead of the teachers making all of the decisions, they should hear the voices of some of the youth. They should kind of give the kids a chance for their voice to be heard.*
- *The more you're involved, the more support you get. What happens to the people who don't do anything, but need our support? Where's the support for them?*
- *I do it because there's this little kid who didn't know how to read yet, and his mom didn't have time...so I helped him.*

These major themes surfaced in all of the four environments on which the teen participants were questioned—families, schools, communities, and information and services. The specific supports mentioned for each of these four environments are summarized in the next four pages.

Supportive Families

These teens see the ideal family as the backbone: the source of love and encouragement, the “righting” mechanism, and support through thick and thin.

The real family, however, is perceived as something else. It is “being there” for these teens that matters. Many focus group participants feel that their parents are not there for them, that they are not present—physically and emotionally. They ask for more time with their parents, more open communication about problems and sensitive subjects. They acknowledge the need for encouragement and guidance, but feel that too many parents give them ultimatums and unreasonable demands. Some indicate that this conflict could be resolved through more careful communication, in which family members show respect, kids participate in setting family guidelines, and parents offer choices.

Participants argue that the social world of today’s adolescents is very different from that experienced by their parents—they expect their parents to make a real effort to “walk in their shoes,” and to try to be aware of these generational and cultural differences. Teens feel that they have been heard when parents take time to be together and allow for thoughtful, intimate communication. Taking time to listen is also a way for parents to be aware of the unique qualities in their child and to assess his/her competencies and maturity level. Participants understand that they must earn trust. In return, they want to be shown respect and allowed to make more and more decisions.

Characteristics of Supportive Families, According to Youth Participants

- Parents are there; they can be counted on.
- Parents spend time going places, doing things, with kids.
- Communication is open; kids can bring up any topic or problem for discussion.
- Brothers and sisters can be counted on to listen and keep secrets.
- Parents give children opportunities to earn trust.
- Parents relinquish control little by little as children mature.
- Children participate in discussing and setting rules.
- Parents articulate reasons for and consequences of rules.
- Parents offer choices, alternatives.
- Parents check on and help with homework.
- Parents try to bridge culture and generation gaps; they walk in kids’ shoes.
- Parents view each child as a unique individual.

Supportive Schools

These teens are proud of their schools' variety of social and sports activities, latest computer technology, parent and teacher involvement, accelerated learning opportunities and school clinics. Many go to school because the social scene feels so good. Alternative schools are much appreciated by a few who do not find the mainstream comfortable. A few kids seem to be sticking it out in school, but feel that their courses are not relevant to their needs and that their teachers don't offer fun ways to learn.

Youth participants seem to be searching for caring and connectedness, fair treatment and recognition in the context of their schools. They voice high expectations, particularly of their teachers, asking that they not only extend themselves in terms of time and extra help, but also personally. Some want teachers to be their friends; others want them to be counselors. Short of offering friendship, the teens express satisfaction and approval when teachers show openness and a willingness to communicate at a personal level by telling stories about themselves. School counselors have disappointed many of the teen participants, in part by not being available when they were needed, and also by not keeping student information confidential. Confidentiality is highly valued by these young people, and they fully expect that what they share about their personal or family turmoil will not go beyond the confines of the counselor's office. Some say that they would not turn to the school counselor with a problem because of this lapse in trust. The school principal is perceived primarily as a standard setter, an authority figure and disciplinarian. Some participants argue that principals have a great deal to learn from students and could strengthen discipline policies by encouraging dialogue with students.

Schools are not safe places to be for all participants. While a few complain of the threat of violence, the more common concern is a social environment where stereotypes, prejudice, and harassment are not checked. Race, sexual orientation, gender, socioeconomic class, and clothes are all mentioned as sources of hurtful bias. Teachers and staff are perceived as particularly biased around student appearance and dress. Both male and female participants report cases of male teachers responding to female students in sexual ways.

Characteristics of Supportive Schools, According to Youth Participants

- Teachers foster close relationships with students.
- Teachers reach out and offer help.
- Teachers have time/take time to talk about non-academic matters.
- Teachers communicate high expectations and look for special qualities in each student.
- Teachers offer hands-on learning activities and evaluate students according to individual strengths and weaknesses.
- School counselors keep information confidential; they don't tell parents or authorities.
- School counselors are available to students and have time to talk.
- Students and staff communicate in an environment free of stereotyping, prejudice, and harassment.
- Principals and students work together on discipline policies and student activities.
- School offers variety of extracurricular activities and social events.
- School provides up-to-date informational technology and offers variety of services and programs to meet diverse student needs.

Supportive Communities

As teens mature, they seek more of their social needs in the community, away from the confines of parental supervision. Hanging out with friends, participating in team sports and doing volunteer work through youth oriented organizations seem to be the ways these participants seek to meet their needs for belonging and participation. They want both structured, self-enhancing activities as well as time and safe places to simply be together, to “hang-out,” or “chill.” Malls and parking lots are often the default places for being with friends. Kids in some rural and eastern areas of King County complain of “nothing to do, nowhere to go, no way to get there.” Organized sports seem to be these teens’ big involvement, but more say they would be involved in sports if money were not an issue. Volunteer work through church and youth groups is another way these kids enjoy being together and participants voice a need for more opportunities to “give back” to the community. Many teens find the time for, and rewards from, employment, while others admit that work lessens their involvement in school and threatens their time for study and sleep.

These teens recognize the value of relationships with adults other than parents, and they identify actions and approaches used by adults that show that they care. Most central to these relationships is non-judgmental communication. These teens resent their “bad rep” and want individual adults and media messages to go beyond stereotypes of troublesome teens, and instead to expect good things from all teens and to recognize their achievements.

Characteristics of Supportive Communities, According to Youth Participants

- There are safe places for teens to be together, to “hang-out” in an unstructured environment, open late on week-ends and summer nights.
- Community and youth centers offer age-relevant programs that include skill-enhancing activities as well as recreation.
- Opportunities for youth to volunteer time/talents are widely offered and publicized.
- Youth participate in planning the activities designed for youth.
- Adults reach out in order to involve teens in opportunities to participate and belong.
- Adults are available and take time when teens reach out for help.
- Adults assume an approach when communicating with teens that is relaxed yet energetic, nonjudgmental and respectful of teens’ need for confidentiality.
- Adults expect the best of each teen they encounter and avoid stereotyping.

Access to Information and Services

School-based clinics get a positive review by the participants who have experience using them through the Seattle schools. Confidentiality, breadth of service and quality of clinic staff are all highly praised. Peer counselors and Natural Helpers are mentioned but get mixed reviews; some kids complain that they don't know who their peer helpers are.

Counseling is seen as crucial to problem-solving by kids with problems. The out-of-school and homeless kids in particular spoke of the strong support they receive from counselors at the Orion Center and Denny Shelter. Other participants who are struggling with problems related to anger, self-esteem, pregnancy, and parenting, all want help in understanding what is going on in their lives.

According to participants, information to help teens avoid or cope with risky behaviors is not readily available. A few high school females find that if teens need information badly enough to search for it, they will find it. The informal sources of information most often mentioned are mothers and friends; formal sources are most often libraries, teen hotlines, Planned Parenthood, health and science classes, and health clinics. Teens want to be assured of anonymity when they seek information, but also in certain circumstances want face to face communication in certain circumstances and will therefore seek out compassionate counselors who promise confidentiality. Some teens feel that schools should be "throwing information" at students because they are already tied to the schoolhouse so intimately.

Characteristics of Good Information Sources and Services, According to Youth Participants

- Helpful parents and friends are understanding; they offer advice, but not demands.
- Counseling is a prominent and well-publicized part of any youth service.
- Confidentiality is promised and kept.
- Counselors/nurses/ social workers have time to talk and to make teens comfortable.
- Counselors/nurses offer choices; they do not follow their own agendas.
- Parental consent is not required.
- Information is straightforward and explicit and utilizes visual materials.
- Peer counselors are well identified.
- Health services are school-based.



Photo: ?????????

Developmental Assets

How many youth experience specific developmental assets?

Developmental assets are building blocks that children and adolescents need to grow up competent, caring, and healthy. When present, these assets protect young people from risk-taking behaviors and nurture behaviors that are valued. The Search Institute has identified and measured 40 of these assets in surveys carried out in Seattle, Bellevue and Mercer Island schools during 1996 and 1997.

External assets are positive developmental experiences that surround youth with support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time. They are provided by many persons from different parts of a child's community. *Internal assets* involve the internal strengths, commitments, and values young people need to guide their choices, priorities, and decisions. They are grouped into the categories of commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity.

Data Notes: These percentages reflect the responses of students in grades 9 and 11 in all three school districts.

Source: Developmental Assets: A Profile of Your Youth, Seattle, Bellevue, Mercer Island Public Schools, 1996-1997.

Percent of Public School Students Who Reported They Experience Developmental Assets, Seattle, Bellevue, and Mercer Island, 1996-1997

EXTERNAL ASSETS		Seattle	Bellevue	Mercer Island
SUPPORT	1. Family support: Family life provides high levels of love and support.	58%	67%	71%
	2. Positive family communication: Young person and his or her parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek parent(s') advice and counsel.	22%	27%	30%
	3. Other adult relationships: Young person receives support from three or more non-parent adults.	36%	43%	52%
	4. Caring neighborhood: Young person experiences caring neighbors.	28%	32%	34%
	5. Caring school climate: School provides a caring, encouraging environment.	17%	25%	30%
	6. Parent involvement in schooling: Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.	23%	30%	33%
EMPOWERMENT	7. Community values youth: Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.	14%	16%	21%
	8. Youth as resources: Young people are given useful roles in the community.	25%	30%	38%
	9. Service to others: Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.	42%	50%	55%
	10. Safety: Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.	42%	51%	65%
BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS	11. Family boundaries: Family has clear rules and consequences; and monitors the young person's whereabouts.	38%	44%	44%
	12. School boundaries: School provides clear rules and consequences.	33%	38%	38%
	13. Neighborhood boundaries: Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.	33%	38%	43%
	14. Adult role models: Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.	22%	29%	37%
	15. Positive peer influence: Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.	52%	65%	71%
	16. High expectations: Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.	35%	39%	46%
CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME	17. Creative activities: Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.	21%	25%	29%
	18. Youth programs: Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations.	52%	65%	76%
	19. Religious community: Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.	45%	51%	51%
	20. Time at home: Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do," two or fewer nights per week.	60%	62%	65%

Percent of Public School Students Who Reported They Experience Developmental Assets
Seattle, Bellevue, and Mercer Island, 1996-1997

INTERNAL ASSETS		Seattle	Bellevue	Mercer Island
COMMITMENT TO LEARNING	21. Achievement motivation: Young person is motivated to do well in school.	64%	77%	84%
	22. School engagement: Young person is actively engaged in learning.	55%	70%	76%
	23. Homework: Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.	63%	80%	89%
	24. Bonding to school: Young person cares about his or her school.	53%	62%	67%
	25. Reading for pleasure: Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.	30%	28%	31%
POSITIVE VALUES	26. Caring: Young person places high value on helping other people.	44%	45%	49%
	27. Equality and social justice: Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.	50%	48%	50%
	28. Integrity: Young person acts on convictions and stands up for his or her beliefs.	66%	70%	74%
	29. Honesty: Young person tells the truth even when it is not easy.	59%	64%	70%
	30. Responsibility: Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.	59%	60%	63%
	31. Restraint: Young person believes that it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.	33%	45%	48%
SOCIAL COMPETENCIES	32. Planning and decision-making: Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.	31%	36%	32%
	33. Interpersonal competence: Young person has empathy, sensitivity, friendship skills.	41%	51%	49%
	34. Cultural competence: Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.	48%	53%	56%
	35. Resistance skills: Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.	37%	46%	46%
	36. Peaceful conflict resolution: Young person seeks to resolve conflict non-violently.	43%	54%	59%
POSITIVE IDENTITY	37. Personal power: Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."	41%	46%	56%
	38. Self-esteem: Young person reports having a high self-esteem.	52%	50%	55%
	39. Sense of purpose: Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."	55%	58%	63%
	40. Positive view of personal future: Young person is optimistic about his or her personal future.	67%	72%	77%



Developmental Assets

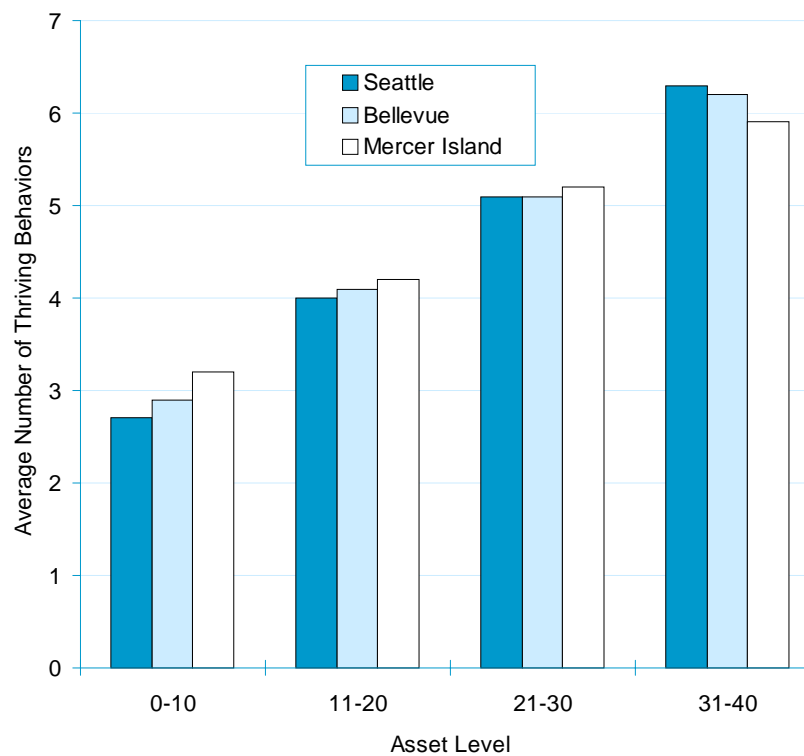
What is the link between developmental assets and thriving behaviors in youth?

The bar graph shows the relationship between the number of assets and the positive choices young people make. Youth with more assets generally report higher average levels on eight thriving indicators. From existing research, it is not clear whether or not this relationship is causal.

These eight indicators or thriving behaviors are defined on page 29. The findings are reported for the total sample in each of the three school districts and by asset level. For example, 25% of the total sample of Seattle students reported that they get mostly "A"s on their report card. For those students who have 1-10 assets, only 11% report getting mostly "A"s, while twice as many students who have 11-20 assets report getting mostly "A"s. For those Seattle students who have 31-40 assets, 53% get mostly "A"s.

Data Notes: These percentages reflect the responses of students in grades 9 and 11 in all three school districts.

Average Number of Thriving Behaviors Reported by Public School Students By Number of Assets Experienced
Seattle, Bellevue, and Mercer Island, 1996-1997



Source: Developmental Assets: A Profile of Your Youth, Seattle, Bellevue, Mercer Island Public Schools, 1996-1997.

Percent of Public School Students Who Reported Each of 8 Thriving Behaviors, By Asset Level
Seattle, Bellevue, and Mercer Island, 1996-1997

Thriving Behaviors		School District	Percent of Total Sample	Percent by Number of Assets			
Category	Definition			1-10	11-20	21-30	31-40
Succeeds in School	Gets mostly As on report card.	Seattle	25%	11%	23%	37%	53%
		Bellevue	32%	11%	26%	42%	54%
		Mercer Island	40%	17%	32%	47%	60%
Helps Others	Helps friends or neighbors one or more hours per week.	Seattle	74%	55%	73%	86%	96%
		Bellevue	81%	66%	76%	86%	95%
		Mercer Island	85%	70%	79%	90%	95%
Values Diversity	Places high importance on getting to know people of other racial/ethnic groups.	Seattle	62%	41%	63%	76%	88%
		Bellevue	60%	33%	54%	68%	84%
		Mercer Island	55%	47%	45%	58%	79%
Maintains Good Health	Pays attention to healthy nutrition and exercise.	Seattle	48%	26%	45%	68%	88%
		Bellevue	58%	28%	48%	69%	87%
		Mercer Island	62%	23%	50%	74%	84%
Exhibits Leadership	Has been a leader of a group or organization in the last twelve months.	Seattle	63%	49%	62%	76%	87%
		Bellevue	73%	54%	70%	81%	90%
		Mercer Island	80%	53%	78%	83%	90%
Resists Danger	Avoids doing things that are dangerous.	Seattle	27%	13%	25%	39%	50%
		Bellevue	24%	9%	18%	30%	43%
		Mercer Island	22%	13%	14%	25%	40%
Delays Gratification	Saves money for something special rather than spending it all right away.	Seattle	43%	24%	42%	56%	79%
		Bellevue	52%	32%	46%	60%	76%
		Mercer Island	52%	33%	49%	55%	64%
Overcomes Adversity	Does not give up when things get difficult.	Seattle	66%	55%	66%	74%	84%
		Bellevue	72%	56%	69%	77%	88%
		Mercer Island	78%	63%	72%	84%	83%

Developmental Assets

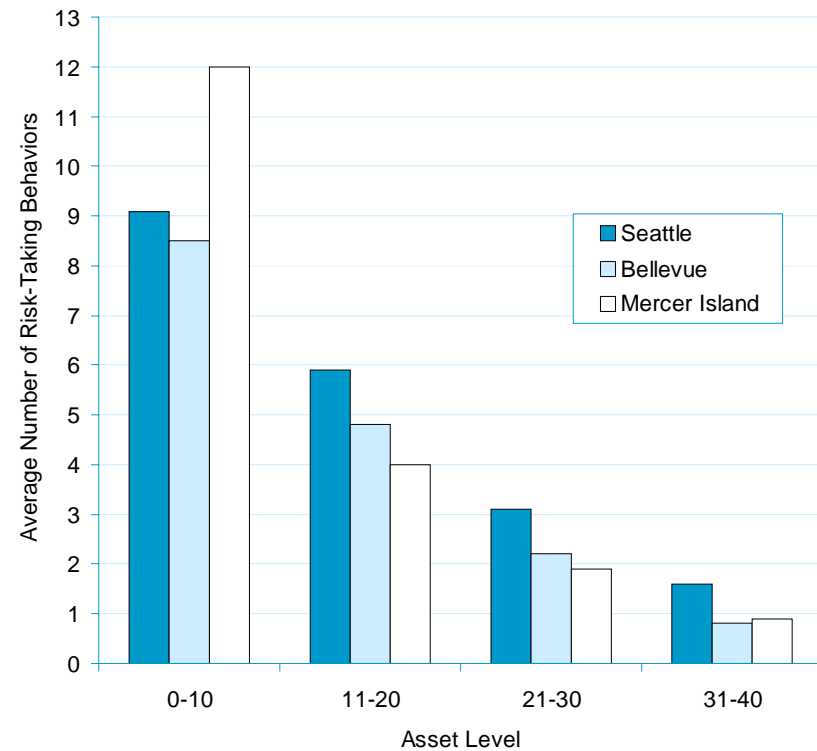
What is the link between developmental assets and risk-taking behaviors in youth?

The bar graph shows the relationship between number of developmental assets and choices by youth that involve risk. Generally, the more assets youth have, the fewer risk-taking behaviors they report. From existing research, it is not yet possible to know if their relationship is causal.

The table on page 31 defines these ten risk-taking behaviors and suggests how protective developmental assets are for each behavior. For example, 14% of all Bellevue students reported that they had used alcohol three or more times in the last 30 days or had gotten drunk once or more in the last two weeks. As many as 34% of Bellevue students with only 1-10 assets said that they had used alcohol in this way, but only 1% with 31-40 assets reported this behavior.

Data Notes: These percentages reflect the responses of students in grades 9 and 11 in all three school districts.

Average Number of Risk-Taking Behaviors Reported by Public School Students By Number of Assets Experienced
Seattle, Bellevue, and Mercer Island, 1996-1997



Source: Developmental Assets: A Profile of Your Youth, Seattle, Bellevue, Mercer Island Public Schools, 1996-1997.

Percent of Public School Students Who Reported Each of 10 Risk-Taking Behaviors, By Asset Level
Seattle, Bellevue, and Mercer Island, 1996-1997

Risk-Taking Behaviors		School District	Percent of Total Sample	Percent by Number of Assets			
Category	Definition			1-10	11-20	21-30	31-40
Alcohol	Has used alcohol three or more times in the last 30 days or has gotten drunk once or more in the last two weeks.	Seattle	25%	42%	26%	15%	4%
		Bellevue	14%	34%	18%	6%	1%
		Mercer Island	17%	60%	22%	7%	2%
Tobacco	Smokes one or more cigarettes every day or uses chewing tobacco frequently.	Seattle	17%	33%	18%	5%	2%
		Bellevue	9%	29%	11%	3%	1%
		Mercer Island	6%	30%	9%	2%	2%
Illicit Drugs	Used illicit drugs three or more times in the last 12 months (includes cocaine, LSD, PCP or angel dust, heroin, and amphetamines).	Seattle	32%	53%	34%	15%	7%
		Bellevue	15%	36%	19%	6%	2%
		Mercer Island	14%	59%	18%	6%	0%
Sexual Intercourse	Has had sexual intercourse three or more times in lifetime.	Seattle	23%	35%	24%	15%	7%
		Bellevue	10%	22%	12%	5%	2%
		Mercer Island	7%	32%	12%	3%	0%
Depression/ Suicide	Is frequently depressed and/or has attempted suicide.	Seattle	26%	39%	29%	15%	6%
		Bellevue	21%	43%	25%	15%	6%
		Mercer Island	18%	47%	20%	14%	10%
Anti-Social Behavior	Has been involved in three or more incidents of shoplifting, trouble with police, or vandalism in the last 12 months.	Seattle	28%	50%	28%	12%	4%
		Bellevue	19%	47%	24%	7%	2%
		Mercer Island	12%	27%	17%	4%	0%
Violence	Has engaged in 3 or more acts of fighting, hitting, injuring a person, carrying/using a weapon, or threatening physical harm in last	Seattle	36%	57%	36%	21%	11%
		Bellevue	28%	62%	33%	15%	4%
		Mercer Island	19%	67%	28%	10%	2%
School Problems	Has skipped school two or more days in the last four weeks and/or has below a C average.	Seattle	27%	48%	28%	13%	6%
		Bellevue	13%	35%	14%	5%	2%
		Mercer Island	5%	23%	6%	3%	0%
Driving and Alcohol	Has driven after drinking or ridden with a drinking driver three or more times in the last 12 months.	Seattle	19%	30%	20%	9%	2%
		Bellevue	10%	21%	12%	5%	1%
		Mercer Island	8%	31%	12%	4%	0%
Gambling	Has gambled three or more times in the last 12 months.	Seattle	21%	36%	21%	14%	7%
		Bellevue	16%	29%	19%	10%	3%
		Mercer Island	17%	47%	21%	12%	7%

Risk and Protective Factors

How many youth have specific protective factors in their lives?

While some youth surveys report positive factors as "assets", other surveys report them as "protective factors." Protective factors are the same as assets. Both terms describe elements of a social environment that should be in place if a young person is to develop in a positive direction. Decades of research have shown that a number of protective factors are associated with decreased likelihood of health risk behaviors, including alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse, violence and delinquent behaviors.

The table shows the proportion of King County youth who reported having community, school, and peer-individual protective factors in their lives. Fewer 10th graders reported having certain protective factors than 6th graders, especially rewards for conventional involvement from community and school. (No family protective factors were asked in the 1998 survey).

Source: Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behavior, 1998.

Percent of Students Who Reported They Experience Specific Protective Factors, Select King County Public Schools, 1998

	Protective Factors	6th Grade	8th Grade	10th Grade
Community	Rewards for conventional involvement	62%	47%	38%
	Opportunities for community involvement	72%	75%	72%
School	Opportunities for positive involvement	78%	66%	64%
	Rewards for conventional involvement	66%	46%	37%
Peer-Individual	Belief in the moral order	84%	67%	65%
	Social skills	81%	66%	63%
	Religiosity	45%	48%	44%

Data Notes: "Rewards for conventional involvement" -- young people are recognized and rewarded for their contributions; "Belief in the moral order" -- young people generally prescribe to a belief in what is "right" or "wrong"; "Religiosity" -- frequency with which youth attend religious services or activities.

In 1998, the Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behavior was carried out with a representative sample for Washington State. Many King County schools that were not drawn into the state sample carried out the same survey, resulting in a local King County sample that may or may not be representative of the actual student population. Local results are from 6th, 8th and 10th graders in 68 schools in 11 of King County's 19 school districts, including: Auburn, Federal Way, Highline, Lake Washington, Renton, Riverview, Seattle (one middle school), Shoreline, Snoqualmie Valley, Tahoma, and Vashon Island. Approximately 3,400 6th grade, 2,900 8th grade and 2,300 10th grade students participated.

Risk and Protective Factors

How many youth have specific risk factors in their lives?

“Risk factors” are the opposite of protective factors. They are conditions or events in life that may push youth towards risky decisions and behaviors and then harmful health outcomes, such as violent behaviors and alcohol abuse.

The table shows the percent of King County students who have specific risk factors in their lives. More 10th grade students than 6th grade students report some of these risk factors but not all. (No family risk factors were asked in the 1998 survey).

Source: Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behavior, 1998.

Percent of Students Who Reported They Experience
Specific Risk Factors, Select King County Public Schools, 1998

	Risk Factors	6th Grade	8th Grade	10th Grade
Community	Low neighborhood attachment	19%	23%	29%
	Community disorganization	7%	7%	5%
	Personal transition and mobility	19%	16%	17%
	Community transition and mobility	31%	30%	28%
	Laws and norms favorable to drug use	12%	27%	41%
School	Perceived availability of drugs, gangs, handguns	13%	39%	64%
	Academic failure	15%	18%	23%
	Little commitment to school	17%	33%	41%
Peer-Individual	Rebelliousness	14%	23%	22%
	Early initiation of problem behavior	25%	39%	58%
	Impulsiveness	12%	14%	13%
	Antisocial behavior	5%	9%	14%
	Attitudes favorable towards antisocial behavior	5%	11%	9%
	Attitudes favorable towards alcohol/other drug use	5%	16%	24%
	Perceived risk of alcohol and other drug use	18%	25%	30%
	Interaction with antisocial peers	8%	18%	21%
	Friends use of drugs	20%	48%	68%
	Sensation seeking	27%	40%	46%
	Rewards for anti-social involvement	25%	47%	50%

Data Notes: In 1998, the Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behavior was carried out with a representative sample for Washington State. Many King County schools that were not drawn into the state sample carried out the same survey, resulting in a local King County sample that may or may not be representative of the actual student population. Local results are from 6th, 8th and 10th graders in 68 schools in 11 of King County's 19 school districts, including: Auburn, Federal Way, Highline, Lake Washington, Renton, Riverview, Seattle (one middle school), Shoreline, Snoqualmie Valley, Tahoma, and Vashon Island. Approximately 3,400 6th grade, 2,900 8th grade and 2,300 10th grade students participated.

Risk & Protective Factors

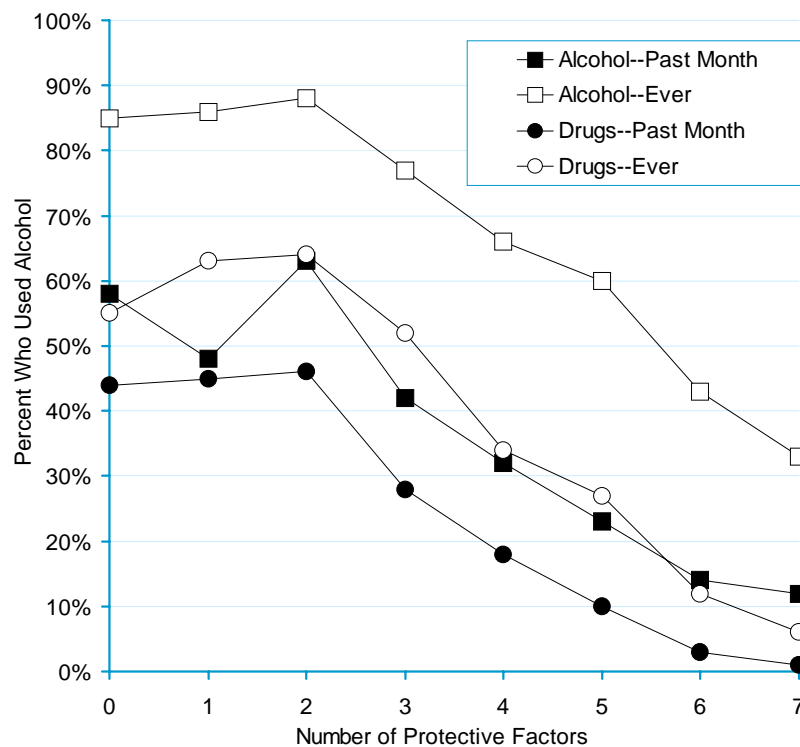
How is the number of protective factors related to alcohol and drug use?

The lines sloping downward to the right show that the more protective factors King County youth have in their lives, the less likely they are to use alcohol and drugs. The same relationship is found statewide, though not shown here.

Data Notes: In 1998, the Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behavior was carried out with a representative sample for Washington State. Many King County schools that were not drawn into the state sample carried out the same survey, resulting in a local King County sample that may or may not be representative of the actual student population. Local results are from 6th, 8th and 10th graders in 68 schools in 11 of King County's 19 school districts, including: Auburn, Federal Way, Highline, Lake Washington, Renton, Riverview, Seattle (one middle school), Shoreline, Snoqualmie Valley, Tahoma, and Vashon Island. Approximately 3,400 6th grade, 2,900 8th grade and 2,300 10th grade students participated.

Source: Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behavior, 1998.

The Relationship Between the Number of Protective Factors and Alcohol/Drug Use Reported by Students
Select King County Public Schools, 1998



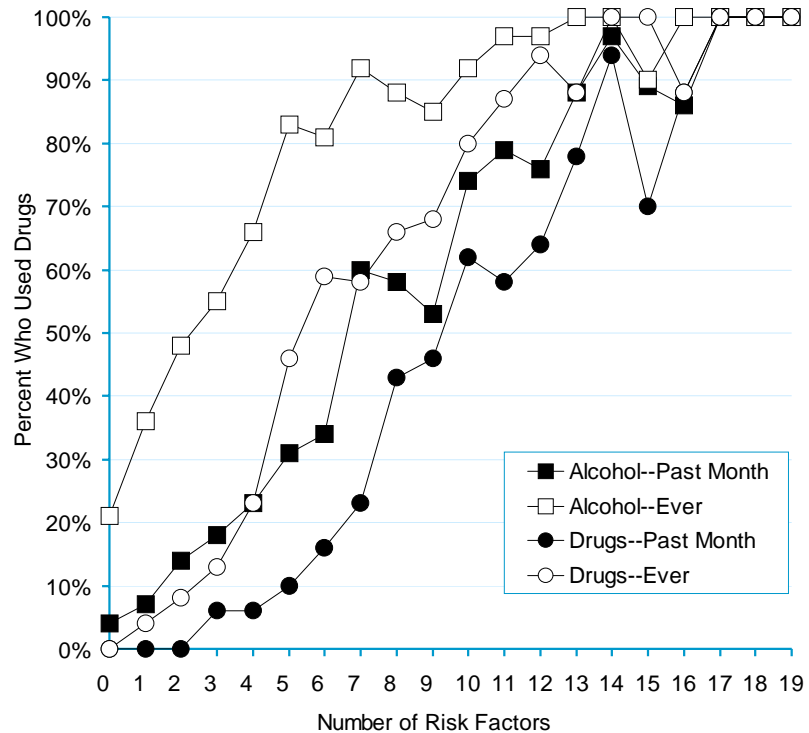
Risk & Protective Factors

How is the number of risk factors related to alcohol and drug use?

In this graph the lines sloping upward to the right show that the more risk factors King County youth have in their lives, the more likely they are to use alcohol and drugs. The same relationship is found statewide (data not shown).

Data Notes: In 1998, the Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behavior was carried out with a representative sample for Washington State. Many King County schools that were not drawn into the state sample carried out the same survey, resulting in a local King County sample that may or may not be representative of the actual student population. Local results are from 6th, 8th and 10th graders in 68 schools in 11 of King County's 19 school districts, including: Auburn, Federal Way, Highline, Lake Washington, Renton, Riverview, Seattle (one middle school), Shoreline, Snoqualmie Valley, Tahoma, and Vashon Island. Approximately 3,400 6th grade, 2,900 8th grade and 2,300 10th grade students participated.

The Relationship Between the Number of Risk Factors and Alcohol/Drug Use Reported by Students
Select King County Public Schools 1998



Source: Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behavior, 1998.

Risk and Protective Factors

Do national studies show the same results as local data with regards to what protects youth from harm?

The link between risk and protective factors and health behaviors is seen nationally as well as in Washington State and King County. The National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health involved a total of 12,118 adolescents in grades 7 through 12 drawn from an initial national school survey of 90,118 adolescents from 80 high school plus their feeder middle schools across the United States.

The objective was to identify risk and protective factors at the family, school, and individual levels as they relate to four areas of adolescent health: emotional health, violence, substance use, and sexuality. Eight measures of health and health-related behaviors were used: emotional distress; suicidal thoughts and behaviors; violence; use of three substances (cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana); and two sexual indicators (age of first sexual intercourse and pregnancy history). The risk and protective factors included measures of family context, school context, and individual characteristics.

Source: Resnick, M, et al., "Protecting Adolescents From Harm: Findings From the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health," *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, September 10, 1997, p. 823

Findings

Youth who have not developed close relationships with grown-ups are much more likely to encounter difficulties, regardless of their gender, race, socioeconomic status or even parents' marital status. The social context in which youth develop provides very important influences on the choices they make and their health status. Specifically, there is consistent evidence that youth who feel cared for and connected to others are doing better than youth who do not perceive caring from adults or a sense of being connected.

According to this study, parents' expectations about school attainment are especially important links to health and healthy behavior. While physical presence of a parent in the home at key times reduces risk (especially substance use), it is consistently less significant than parental connectedness (eg, feelings of warmth, love, and caring from parents). The home environment also shapes behavior. If families allow easy access to guns, alcohol, tobacco, and illicit substances, adolescents are more likely to be involved in suicide, interpersonal violence, and substance use. Parental disapproval of early sexual behavior is associated with a later age of first sexual intercourse.

Working 20 hours or more a week is associated with emotional distress and use of cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana. Appearing "older than most" in class and repeating a grade in school are also associated with substance use and emotional distress.

Examples of Positive Action

What are ideas for individuals and organizations to take action?

The following list of action steps is suggested by The Search Institute and reprinted with permission. Each person, organization and community will think of the most appropriate ways to build developmental assets in the young people around them.

Ideas for Youth

- Form a relationship with a caring mentor in your community or in a youth program or congregation.
- Take advantage of interesting and challenging opportunities through youth programs, co-curricular activities, and congregational youth programs.
- Find chances to build relationships with younger children through service projects, volunteering, tutoring, baby-sitting, and other opportunities.
- Become a peer helper to build assets in your friends and yourself.

Ideas for All Adults

- Learn the names of all children and teenagers who live near you. Greet them by name.
- Build at least one sustained, caring relationship with a child or adolescent either informally or through a mentoring program.

- Look at the list of 40 assets at least once a week and commit to at least one act of asset building every day.
- Volunteer in a school as a tutor, club leader, reader to young students, or other helping roles.
- Proudly play the role of “elder,” passing on the wisdom you have learned from others.

Ideas for Families

- Eat at least one meal together every day.
- Limit television watching.
- Read to or with your children.
- Provide a positive learning environment in your home.
- Articulate your values.
- Encourage active involvement in organizations, teams, and clubs at school, in the community, or in a congregation.
- Limit the amount of time your children spend at home alone.
- Be a friend and asset builder for the friends of your children; welcome them into your home.

Ideas for Schools

- Make it a priority to provide caring environments.
- Train support staff, teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, and other school staff in their role in asset building.
- Expand, diversify, and strengthen co-curricular activities for all youth.
- Provide opportunities for staff to share “best practices” for providing support, establishing boundaries, nurturing values, and teaching social skills and competencies.
- Use schools’ connections to parents to increase parental involvement and to educate parents in asset building.

Ideas for Youth Organizations

- Involve youth in leadership and program planning.
- Provide a range of structured activities for youth with diverse interests and needs.
- Develop expectations and boundaries with youth; enforce appropriate consequences when boundaries are not respected.
- Train volunteers, leaders, and coaches in asset building and in young people’s developmental needs.
- Support young people’s educational development through tutoring, computer skills, literacy programs, and other forms of academic enrichment.

Ideas for Congregations

- Intentionally foster intergenerational relationships by providing activities for all ages within the congregation.
- Listen to what youth say they want.
- Regularly offer parent education as part of the congregation’s educational programs.
- Maintain year-round connections with youth. Don’t lose contact over the summer.
- Involve youth in caring for and teaching younger children.
- Provide many opportunities for youth to be leaders in and contributors to the congregation.

Ideas for Neighborhood Groups

- Create service projects linking adults and children.
- Sponsor creative activities and events that help people get to know their neighbors.
- Coordinate residents to provide safe places where young people can go after school if they would be home alone or if they feel unsafe.
- Organize informal activities (such as pick-up basketball) for young people in the neighborhood.
- Work with children and teenagers to create a neighborhood garden, a neighborhood playground, or a park.

Ideas for Businesses

- Develop family-friendly policies that allow parents to be active in their children's lives.
- Provide opportunities for employees to build relationships with youth through mentoring and other volunteer programs, flexible scheduling, and internships for youth.
- Be intentional about nurturing assets in the lives of teenagers employed by the company.
- Provide resources (donations, in-kind contributions, etc.) to youth development programs and to community-wide efforts on behalf of youth.

Ideas for Government

- Through policy, training, and resource allocation, make asset development a top priority in the city.
- Initiate community-wide efforts to name shared values and boundaries.
- Partner with other organizations in creating child-friendly public places, and safe places for teenagers to gather.
- Help to coordinate and publicize after-school, weekend, and summer opportunities for youth in the city.
- Build the capacity of community-based organizations to serve children and families.



Photo: Sharon

Examples of Positive Action

What is a local example of action by a neighborhood/community group?

FREE RIDE ZONE

Community Bicycle Program

3709 S Ferdinand St., Seattle, WA 98118

(206) 725-9408

David is one of those kids in the middle. He is not a trouble-maker, he is not a scholar. He got expelled from school, so he is in a holding pattern at an alternative school. Some days, he just doesn't go. He could quietly slip through the cracks while no one is paying attention.

One day, while skipping school, David came in to sign up for Earn-a-Bike. When our bike classes started, he showed up early and stayed late. David never scraped together the \$20 class fee, but he worked hard on bike repair, and, after 24 hours, he took home a shiny purple bike. Why a purple bike? It was a surprise birthday present for his sister. It's amazing what a kid can do when you give him a chance. At the Free Ride Zone, we want to give every kid this chance.

Since we started Earn-a-Bike two years ago, nearly 100 kids like David have taken the Free Ride Zone's

after-school bike repair class. In class, they learn all about bike repair, from fixing flats to overhauling headsets. More than half go on to earn their own bike, working 24 hours on bike repair outside of class. For some, it's just a cool after-school activity. For others, it's a critical time when they get one-on-one adult attention and real rewards for their work. And for most, it's the only way they can get a bike with all its freedoms and privileges.

Like the freedom to ride with your friends after school. The freedom to get to soccer practice without Mom. The privilege of owning a bike when your family can't afford to buy one. The privilege of knowing a valuable skill better than most adults. These gifts mean a lot to youth, especially here in the Rainier Valley.

Stories like David's are common here. Jamal, who lives in public housing, at first wasn't motivated at all; he'd rather watch TV. But his pride was contagious the day he rode his bike home. Sam labored over a bike for himself, then gave his old one to his brother. Cheza showed all the boys up when she earned hers in record time. And Ricardo just picked out his third bike: two for him, one for his sister.

These kids share the wealth with family members, and with people they've never met. During Earn-a-Bike, their work goes back into the community. Students fix up bikes that neighbors donate, and we

get them back on the road. We donate bikes to organizations like FareStart, a restaurant training program for homeless adults, and Treehouse, which assists foster families.

We involve a hundred volunteers who give their time for kids, bikes, and community. Volunteers learn bike repair along side of youth, learn patience, and learn all the words to KUBE hits. (That's a radio station.) There is no way we could do it without them: last year, volunteers outnumbered staff thirty to one!

Sometimes, we leave the shop. The Free Ride Zone takes youth on bike rides, teaching safe riding while enjoying the sights of Seattle. We run safety rodeos, we sponsor the Annual Kids Bike Swap, and we provide bike parking at events. We even host live music during the summer, because, well, because its fun.

One at a time, we're getting bikes out of basements and back on the streets. We're giving transportation choices to all people, and we're doing it without polluting the environment. We're getting kids off the couch and onto bikes. We are providing them with tools for life. And, as we grow, we are giving jobs to youth.

David came back in this week. He hadn't been in for a while, though we see his bike around all the time whether it's his sister, brother, or mom riding it. Now, he's fixing up an old bike of his own to add to the family fleet. We can't give him everything, but we can help him from slipping through the cracks.

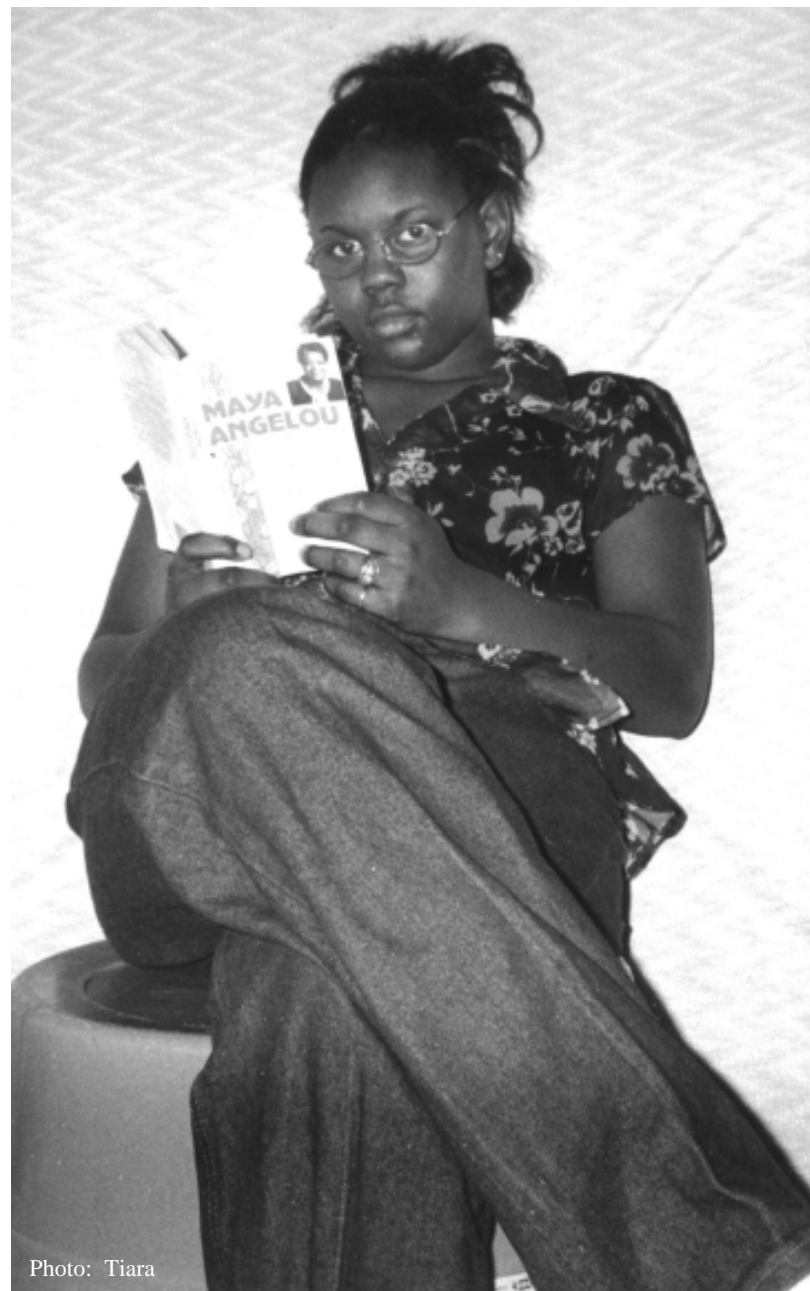


Photo: Tiara

Examples of Positive Action

What happens when we take action early in children's lives?

Two recent studies give evidence of a positive impact of interventions taking place during infancy or elementary school years on children's later behavior as teens. Both interventions were carefully evaluated and thus provide encouraging examples of positive action that "works!"

Long-term Effects of Nurse Home Visits on Children's Behavior

This study was carried out in order to examine the long-term effects of a program of prenatal and early childhood home visits by nurses on children's antisocial behavior.

Four hundred pregnant women enrolled and a total of 315 of their adolescent offspring participated in a follow-up study when they were 15 years old. The families in the intervention group that received home visits had an average of nine home visits during pregnancy and 23 home visits from the time of birth through the child's second birthday. The (control) groups that did not receive home visits received standard prenatal and well-child care in a clinic.

In the home visits, the nurses promoted: 1) positive health-related behaviors during pregnancy and the early years of the child's life, 2) competent care of

their children, and 3) personal development of the mother (family planning, educational achievement, and participation in the work force). Nurses linked families with needed health care and human services and attempted to involve other family members and friends in the pregnancy, birth, and early care of the child.

The outcomes that were measured when the children were age 15 included the following: children's self-reports of running away, arrests, convictions, being sentenced to youth corrections, initiation of sexual intercourse, number of sex partners, and use of illegal substances; school records of suspensions; teachers' reports of children's disruptive behavior in school; and parents' reports of children's arrests and behavioral problems related to the children's use of alcohol and other drugs.

Results: When comparing the adolescents whose mothers received nurse visits during pregnancy and afterward with the adolescents whose mothers did not, those who received the visits reported fewer instances of running away, fewer convictions and violations of probation, fewer sex partners, fewer cigarettes smoked per day, and fewer days having consumed alcohol in the last months.

Source: Complete article in Olds, D et al, Long-term Effects of Nurse Home Visitation on Children's Criminal and Antisocial Behavior, Journal of American Medical Association (JAMA) October, 14, 1998, Vol. 280, No. 14.

Long-term Effects of Strengthening Protection During Childhood

This Seattle study examined the long-term effects of an intervention that combined teacher training, parent education, and social competence training for children during the elementary grades on adolescent health behaviors at age 18 years. The full intervention included a five-day in-service training for teachers each intervention year, parenting classes offered to parents when children were in grades 1 through 3 and 5 through 6, and social competence training for children in grades 1 and 6.

The outcomes measured at age 18 years included self-reported violent and nonviolent crime, substance use, sexual activity, pregnancy, bonding to school, school achievement, grade repetition and school dropout, suspension and/or expulsion, and school misbehavior, delinquency charges from court records, grade point average, achievement test scores, and disciplinary action reports from school records.

Results: Students who received the full intervention reported less violent delinquent behavior, heavy drinking, sexual intercourse, having multiple sex partners, and pregnancy or causing pregnancy by 18 years of age. Moreover, the students who received the full intervention reported more commitment and attachment to school, better academic achievement, and less school misbehavior than the students who did not receive the intervention.

Source: Social Development Research Group, University of Washington. Complete article found in Hawkins, JD, et al, Preventing Adolescent Health Risk Behaviors by Strengthening Protection During Childhood, Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine, March, 1999.



Photo: Julie

Photo page 41: Tiara.

I'm Tiara and I'm 16 years old. I decided to take this class because I like to take pictures, so why not learn a little more about the advantages of photography? I love to take pictures of a lot of different things, like the water. Some I just take to show what mood I'm in. If I was to take a picture right now it would show you that I'm in a good mood but kind of tired too. I wasn't sure what photo to put on display but this one is my favorite so far. I wish I had taken more family photos, because my family is the most important thing in the whole world to me.

Photo page 43: Julie.

My name is Julie. It takes time and patience to print a picture. It takes all of my patience. I'm always eager to see what's coming to me, looking at all aspects, good and bad. I'm in a rush to get things done, always curious to see what's in my future. This pushes me forward the next day to be successful in everything I do and achieve whatever my heart may yearn for. I can't really say how I see the world because I haven't seen much of it. But my world is confusing. I like being behind the lens, watching and waiting for that simple figure to take a fascinating form so I can make it shine.